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POLISH MUSIC

By ZDZISLAW JACHIMECKI

AFTER four centuries of bondage to West-European culture, initiated by the acceptance of Christianity;—after four centuries of cultivating religious, melodic hymns which adhered to the Gregorian form and spirit (later written in the native tongue), there arose in Poland, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, a form of music arranged in parts—an harmonic, half-vocal, half-instrumental art. It blossomed forth for the first time in the Wawellian¹ court of King Władysław Jagiello at Cracow. The first indubitable date of artistic musical culture is 1424, the birth-year of the long-awaited and sole male heir of Władysław Jagiello, and his successor to the Polish-Lithuanian throne—Władysław Warnencyk (1424-1444).

This joyous happening in the royal family was recorded by a Latin panegyric, which was really a travesty of a pious hymn, hurriedly put together. It was sung, possibly after the baptismal ceremony, by one singer or perhaps a few, sung monodically, and accompanied by some instrument. This “occasional” composition mentions in its text the names of the royal parents, Władysław and Sophia, with that of the royal prince and the date of his birth. The second son of Władysław Jagiello, Kazimir (born the 16th of May, 1426, died in 1427), barely ten months old, also had a panegyric hymn dedicated to him, beginning with the words *Hystorigraphi aciem mentis lustratae faciem*, the music to which was written for one vocal and two instrumental parts by the Polish composer, known to us by name only, Mikołaj Radomczyk (Nicolaus de Radom).

Music resounded in the Cracovian court during pious moments; music which was revived by Jagiello. In order to entertain the court, Mikołaj of Radom composed a Magnificat for three voices, modeled on Gregorian themes (two Gloriæ of the mass and one Credo), two of these compositions having movements written in imitative style. Side by side with the works of Mikołaj of Radom, were executed the compositions of Italian musicians,

¹Wawel, the royal castle in Cracow, capital of Poland until the seventeenth century.

who wrote before the epoch of Dufay's influence on things musical.¹

Owing to distance from the real centres of medieval musical art—Florence and Paris, Flanders and England—music began to bloom early in Cracow, and it was there that the first Polish composer appeared. The dates already mentioned precede by several decades any similar feats in Germany, where not until the last quarter of the fifteenth century did native musicians create polyphonic compositions—Adam of Fulda and Martin Agricola Ackermann.

The early bloom of Polish musical culture and its development during the last century, established Poland's foremost place in music in this part of Europe. An authentic fact testifies to this; the famous German composer Heinrich Finck (born 1445, died 1527) received his musical education in Cracow, where he, being only a child, sang in the royal cathedral choir; in maturer years he was the musician to Jan Olbracht and Alexander. The grandchild of Heinrich's brother, Hermann Finck, producing his composition in 1536 in Nuremberg, wrote in the introduction: "Exstant melodïæ, in quibus magna artis perfectio est, compositæ ab Henrico Finckio, cuius ingenium in adolescentia in Polonia excultum est, et postea regia liberalitate, ornatum est. Hic cum fuerit patruus meus magnus, gravissimam causam habet, cuim gentem polonicam præcipuer venerer, quia excellentissimi regis Polonici Alberti et fratrum liberalitate hic meus patruus magnus ad tantum artis fastigium pervenit."

Musical relations between Poland and Germany lasted uninterruptedly for many years and revealed themselves in various ways. In spite of the steady growth of native musical production, the German publishers of collected musical compositions fortified their publications with works of Polish composers, placing them next to the greatest masters of the sixteenth century. Thus at Nuremberg, the printing firm of Montanus & Neuber advertised in the year 1554 a motet by a great Polish composer—Waclaw Szamotulski—in the publication "*Psalmorum Selectorium a præstantissimis . . . artificibus . . . tomus quartus*," and in 1563 a second motet by Szamotulski in the collection "*Thesaurus musicus continens selectissimas . . . harmonias*." It was an honor for Szamotulski to appear in these publications, but it was also an honor

¹The source in which we found the history of the cultivation of artistic music of the same sort as the art of the South-Italian composers—trecento and quattrocento—is the valuable MS. No. 52 in the library of the Opinagorska Majorat of Count Krasinski in Warsaw. A treatise on the thirty-six works there included was published by me in the "*Academical Discourses*," Cracow.

for the publishers to put before the world creations as splendid as the motets of Szamotulski. They were sung throughout Europe, for the prints of that Nuremburg firm were widely distributed. Neither did they overlook beyond the borders of Poland a second composer of Zygmunt August's time—the splendid Martin Lwoczyk-Leopolita. In one vocal catalogue, written in Germany (now in the local library of Wroclaw [Breslau]), we find his beautiful motet in quintet-form, *Resurgente Christo Domino*. Not only through musical prints, but also by means of copies, did the Polish compositions spread over the world as a partial utterance of artistic culture in its Golden Age.

Not long after, Polish musicians exhibited abroad to what perfection they had developed musical brilliancy and technique. France took from Poland her finest lute-player, Jacob Polak. In Sauval's work, "*Histoires et Recherches des Antiquités de Paris*" (1724, Vol. I, p. 322), we read the following: "Jacob, le plus excellent joueur de luth de son siècle, naquit en Pologne, et vint fort jeune en France, où il se fit plus connaître sous le nom de Pollonois que par celui de Jacob. Son jeu étoit si plein et si harmonieux, son toucher si fort et si beau, qu'il tiroit l'âme du luth, comme parlent ceux de cette profession. Il avoit la main si bonne et si vite, qu'il ne levoit point les doigts en jouant, et sembloit les avoir collés sur son luth : adresse fort rare, et qui n'étoit point comme avant lui. Bien qu'il touchât le grand luth mieux qu'aucun de son temps, c'étoit encore tout autre chose sur le petit. Enfin l'on ajoute que jamais personne n'a si bien préludé. Sa grande réputation lui fit donner la charge de joueur de luth de la chambre du roi. Il acquit si peu de bien, comme ne s'en souciant pas, qu'il est mort pauvre, à l'âge de soixante ans. Ballard a imprimé quantité de bonnes pièces de sa composition. Les musiciens font grand cas de ses gaillardes, qui lors étoient à la mode; aussi sont-elles les meilleures de ce temps-là. On tient qu'il ne jouoit jamais mieux que quand il avoit bien bu, ce qui lui arrivoit souvent. Il ne se maria point, et mourut vers l'an 1605, d'une paralysie, à la rue Bertin-Poirée, où il demouroit." In several foreign editions of lute music (Besard's in 1617, G. L. Fuhrmann's in 1615 and Jan van de Hove's in 1622) we find a series of Polak's works, occupying a conspicuous place on account of their value.

Another fine Polish lute-player of the sixteenth century, Wojciech Dlugoraj, did not find fame as a virtuoso beyond Poland's borders; a few of his Italian villanellas were obtained by Jan Besard for his collection, "*Thesaurus harmonicus*." His hand-copied compositions had considerable vogue, especially in Germany.

In one form of Polish music Germany always took a keen interest—namely, the Polish dances. As early as the middle of the sixteenth century, we find them in the lute catalogues of German lute-players. Hans Neusidler published a Polish dance in his collection of 1544. The music of this dance did not possess characteristic expression enough to be conspicuous among the other dances in that edition. Undoubtedly the choreographic side of Polish dances, the pompous strides of the walking dances, later adopted by the polonaise, and the sprightly adroitness of the folk-dances, were the cause of the musical and choreographic vogue of our dances toward the end of the sixteenth century. In 1591 Mateusz Waisselius published in the February collection no fewer than thirty-six Polish dances. Some years later they were imitated by a Dresden organist, August Norminger. At the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, the Polish dances enjoyed enormous popularity in Germany, as witnessed by hundreds of Polish dances, advertised in many publications, by Valentin Haussmann, Christoph Demantius, and even the great Hans Leo Hassler.

Whatever changes they underwent merely in musical form in the course of time, their peculiar quality always rendered them acceptable to the musicians of western Europe. In the sixteenth century Polish dances appealed to foreign countries through their highly moral character. Sophie Laska, who accompanied the third wife of the king Zygmunt August to Linz, wrote in a letter to Poland sent from the court of the empress: "What the Empress liked most about Polish ladies was that while dancing they did not let the men kiss or embrace them; the Germans also liked it, and said that the Polish nation is very virtuous." That type of polonaise which survived until to-day probably began to crystallize under the influence of the sarabande in the seventeenth century, its characteristic finale becoming fixed. In a diary of his journey to Poland, published in 1647, Jean le Laboureur (one of the retinue of Maria Gonzaga, wife of Władysław IV) recorded his impressions after seeing a Polish dance performed at the Varsovian court. Its choreotechnic delighted him, for he wrote: "*Je n'ai vu jamais rien de plus grave, de plus doux, ni de plus respectueux.*" He also noticed the musical qualities of this dance and specially mentioned that peculiar finale as "*une cadence bien réglée.*" He doubtless referred to the polonaise. Its already settled musical form entered into the music of all nations and attracted greater and smaller talents, rendering them numerous services in all kinds of music. In the eighteenth century the polonaise (also called in

Italian *alla polacca*) became popular in the instrumental music of Germany. Johann Sebastian Bach wrote several of them for piano (in the *Clavierbuch für Anna Magdalena Bach*, and in one French suite) and for orchestra (*Partita* in B-flat, and *Brandenburg Concerto* No. 3). Bach's oldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, composed twelve polonaises—the only ones of his numerous works that have survived till to-day. Even Georg Friedrich Händel did not overlook our stately dance; he inserted it in his *Concerto grosso* No. 3. In the epoch of musical classicism the polonaise, in its perennial popularity, attracted the greatest composers as well as those whose names have been forgotten. Very familiar to us indeed is the polonaise in the form of a rondo from Mozart's D-major Sonata for piano, and we often hear it performed at the present day. But nobody remembers the composer Johann Schobert, a contemporary of Mozart, whose graceful polonaises were then very fashionable. While the Polish Kingdom was being delimited by the Congress of Vienna,¹ Beethoven wrote a polonaise for the piano and offered it to the Russian empress as an artistic homage for which he obtained a "noble reward." Romanticists of German music also expressed their precious ideas in the form of polonaises. Franz Schubert wrote polonaises for piano four hands, and Carl Maria von Weber was a direct predecessor of Chopin, giving to his polonaises a very technical and brilliant form. In 1831 young Richard Wagner (then 18 years of age) joined the ranks of polonaise-writing masters with his polonaise for piano. Its theme was the impressions evoked in young Wagner by the news of the Polish insurrection—first delight, then sorrow. After many years Wagner wrote about these impressions: "namentlich war, nach grosser Begeisterung für das kämpfende, meine Trauer um das gefallene Polen sehr lebhaft." These same feelings gave birth to the overture *Polonia*, which became universally known only lately and which the young genius of musical drama wove from our national songs sung by his emigrant Polish friends in Leipzig. This polonaise and overture were the threads connecting young Wagner's works with the music of Poland. It would be too tiresome to enumerate all the instrumental polonaises in European music before and after Chopin. One of the most famous is the concerto-polonaise by Liszt.

Nor were polonaises lacking in German vocal music, especially in German folk-song (for instance, in the collection of Sperontes, *Singende Muse an der Pleisse*), and in dramatic music, i. e., opera.

¹The part of Poland assigned to Russia by the Congress of Vienna was called "the Polish Kingdom."

It delights us to find a polonaise in Ann's aria in such an essentially German opera (although mingled with many foreign musical elements) as Weber's *Freischütz* ("Kommt ein schlanker Bursch gegangen"). About 1830 the polonaise became to a great extent master of the rhythm and character of German music. Wagner mentioned this phenomenon by writing these malicious words (at the revival of Ludwig Spohr's *Jessonda* in 1874): "Einem Fluche aller Deutschen, dem selbst der edle Weber [and Wagner himself!] sich nicht zu entziehen vermochte, konnte Spohr noch weniger entgehen, da er als Violinvirtuos ein gefälliges Genre in der Polacca und hierzu eine gewisse Passagen-Eleganz sich ausgebildet hatte, mit denen er nun auch in der Oper glücklich zu bestehen hoffen mochte. Wirklich singt in *Jessonda* halt alles à la Polacca." Even Italian opera did not escape the invasion of European music by the polonaise (let me mention Bellini's *I Puritani*), or the later French opera (with the classic example of Thomas's *Mignon* and the famous polonaise aria of Philine). This polonaise current persisted, although in diminishing volume, almost to the present time, a proof of which is Siegfried Wagner's opera *Kobold*, one scene of which is held throughout in the rhythm and type of a polonaise.

A similarly hearty reception was given by European music to the brisk Polish folk-dance, the mazurka. In Sweden it had long before developed a sort of national dance called "polska dans," which was being composed in great quantities. In the instrumental music of the nineteenth century the mazurka appeared very often.

Here we see plainly the influence of the national and ethnic music of Poland for nearly four centuries, proving how the element of our spirit and culture weaves itself as a creative force into musical art of different sorts and at different times.

Now let us go back to the historic order in which Polish music partook in the culture of nations.

The forms of social life in old Poland were not especially favorable to the development of music. The wide reaches of agricultural land, with cities of whose inhabitants fifty per cent. belonged to foreign nationalities, did not form a fertile ground for the cultivation of an art requiring eager collective forces and durable organizations. Neither the quantity nor the quality of the music created in Poland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be compared with the production of Italy, which at that time was dispersing the life-giving seed of musical form and expression all over Europe, or with the musical production of

France or Germany, which brought forth a series of great composing talents and immortal works. In Poland, music was looked upon casually and treated as a pleasure; it ranked second to other pleasures, especially those of a chivalrous character; whereas the more bourgeois societies considered music as a most beautiful ornament, a genuine necessity of private life and a glory of social life in church or at lay festivals. It is clear why in our nation, a nation least bourgeois, there always has been relatively little music; for music is the most bourgeois of all arts. Hence, the disproportion between the quantity of music in Poland and its monumental character and value, the balance swaying much to the side of the latter.

The greatest part of Polish compositions bloomed under the patronage of the King, or of the ecclesiastical and lay aristocracy. This accounts for the monumental dimensions of powerful cycles of ecclesiastical compositions by Marcin Lwowczyk or Leopolita (Introits and Sequences for the ecclesiastical year based upon Gregorian themes, written about 1570-1580) and of Nicolas Zielenski (from 1611). The cyclic works of Leopolita probably were not heard beyond the boundaries of Poland. Nicolas Zielenski, however, wrote his magnificent volume, consisting of two parts and comprising altogether 119 great works, in Venice. There he published them and dedicated them to musical Europe.

Zielenski, when he went to Italy, was the organist and conductor of the Cathedral in Gniezno (Gnesen). We do not know how much of his life was passed outside of the musical office he held in Poland. Wojciech Baranowski, the archbishop primate, was Zielenski's patron; it was to him that Zielenski inscribed his work with words of the deepest gratitude—the most stately monument of Polish musical culture before Chopin. The first cycle of these compositions, *Offertoria totius anni* (44 offertories, 9 motets, and a Magnificat), comprises works for two choirs of 8 and 7 voices united, with accompaniment of two organs and with groups of instrumentalists for each choir. Just as the works of masters of the Venetian musical school (Willaert, Andrea and Giovanni Gabrielli) were a pattern for the form and style of Zielenski's compositions, so was St. Mark's church, the place which gave birth to the Venetian style, the locale intended for the performance of his works. There were two splendid organs, one at either side of the main altar of the glorious Venetian temple, with two organists; it was just what Zielenski needed for the execution of his works, and while writing he planned to place his two choirs there. Thus it was for Venice in the first place that Zielenski

planned his memorable creations, which were among the best brought to light by the new style of vocal music with accompaniment, still in the first flush of a vigorous and wholesome youth. We are fully justified in estimating this great cycle of Zielenski's Offertories as highly as the principal works of Italian and other foreign masters of the Venetian school. Zielenski was but a pupil, not the founder of a school; yet he was worthy of his teachers. Although we do not possess any documentary evidence, we can surely claim that he was a student in Giovanni Gabrielli's school, like Heinrich Schütz of Germany. The style of Zielenski's music, together with the publication of his works in Venice, gives us a warrant for this statement. Musical Europe received in Zielenski's Offertories one of the most monumental gifts that have enriched the annals of the ecclesiastical music written by musical geniuses of all times; for this work recalls to our memory not only the cycle of motets by Heinrich Isaac, entitled *Chorale Constantinum* (dated 1500-10), but also the *Magnum opus musicum* of Orlando di Lasso, and Palestrina's Offertories for the whole ecclesiastical year. In enumerating the works among which Zielenski's cycle may rightfully occupy a place of honor we might even include the cantatas of J. S. Bach.

The second part of Zielenski's collection, *Communiones totius anni*, consisted of vocal-instrumental and eolistic concertos, duets, terzets and quartets, conspicuous in which is the showy effect of vocal coloratura, which was developed and passionately cultivated in Italy. For the Italian proficients in *gorgheggio* coloratura Zielenski wrote his *Communiones*, in the first place; they opened a wide field for technical display to the singers, who, before gaining an opportunity to charm the audience at the opera with their arias, trills, and long garlands of tones taken in one breath, liked to surprise the church-going folk with their art. Besides these concertos and a series of motets in five or six parts for choirs, this part of Zielenski's work contains three instrumental phantasies, which have an historical significance of their own, being successful attempts in the domain of instrumental music (strictly speaking, orchestral music), which was just taking its first steps on the road to development.

Zielenski's talent (known to us from this one work only, from which European music in general was enabled to derive esthetical advantage), marks the climax of Polish music before Chopin. We still have to note, however, in the seventeenth century, a few milestones in the progress of Polish music which deserve to be mentioned by reason of their value and their relation to the culture

of other countries. These include the instrumental concertos (28 in number) of Adam Jarzembki, from 1627. In some of them the Varsovian royal musician gave his musical impressions of German cities—Berlin, Nuremberg, Königsberg, Spandau, *et al.* He visited these places during a journey mentioned by him in his narrative poem *Gosciniac* (A Souvenir), written in 1643. These works must have interested Germany, both because of their titles (which encouraged German musicians to perform them), and because of the musical value of the ideas they contained, these being melodiously expressive, rhythmically novel, and always gracefully worked out. The only extant copy was found in the municipal library at Breslau. This sufficiently proves that they were known beyond the boundaries of Poland. Besides experiencing the esthetic pleasure of performing them, the foreign musician recognized that the concertos of Jarzembki were the first strictly instrumental works to which the term “concerto” was applicable; up to that time the name of concerto was given to vocal-instrumental compositions in the style of a competitive recital. The concertos of the Polish composer have an unequivocal place in the history of the first period of orchestral music.

The compositions of Bartłomiej Penkiel (conductor and composer at the court of Władysław IV and Jan Kazimierz in Warsaw), written for international use, also speedily found their way beyond the boundaries of Poland. Besides the numerous, sometimes monumental, masses, the finest fruit of his great talent was the cantata *Audite mortales*. If Penkiel had followed the example of Monteverdi and, giving no heed to his priestly robes, had started to write operas, surely the Varsovian opera, the foremost on the continent outside of Italy, would not have been compelled to perform only the works of foreigners. Without proposing further hypotheses, we submit that the tenor part of the above-mentioned cantata, beginning with the words *Heu me miserum*, is an excellent example of dramatic expression in the music of those times. We shall not find in the operas of Peri, Caccini, Rossini, Landi, or even Monteverdi, any ideas that surpass the wonderful inspiration of these measures of Penkiel's cantata. The boldness and beauty of their melodies, the depth of their harmonic mutations, lend them such a dignity of tragic musical expression that nothing in contemporary European music (1640-1650) can be compared with this part of Penkiel's cantata. The marvelous *recitativo arioso* is quite *sui generis* for these times, and appeals like a prophecy of the dramatic expression of Wagner.

Penkiel's works were known in Germany, and were performed there. Copies and notes of his compositions scattered through German archives prove this irrefutably. Side by side with them also entered into German music works of Marcin Mielczewski, another remarkable composer of the Varsovian court during the reign of kings of the Waza¹ family. They stayed there for many years. Johann Seb. Bach came in touch with the compositions of these two composers, several of whose works were in the library of the school of St. Michel at Lüneburg, at which school Bach was a choir-singer when a youth (1700-1703). The management of the city of Leipsic most definitely requested that Polish compositions be executed by its salaried musicians, for the cantor of St. Thomas's church, who was no other than J. S. Bach, wrote to the municipal magistrate: "It is quite surprising that those German musicians are expected to be able to perform naturally all kinds of music, whether it comes from Italy or France, England or Poland."

Thus we see that during four centuries, until the political downfall of our country, music was being produced in Poland, which, side by side with Italian, French and German music, contributed greatly to cover the artistic needs in this field and was even steadily exported. In this active balance of our musical production we do not take into consideration works written for the sole use of Poles, although sometimes of great value. Among such, the first place is occupied by *Nicolas Gomółka's* choruses on words by Kochanowski, 150 in number, published at Cracow in 1580. If only incidentally, we must mention these inspired short musical poems imbued with a truly Polish sentiment, and teeming with fine melodies and harmonic ideas interpreting the spirit of the poetry with admirable subtlety of expression. They are so splendid as realistic tone-pictures, in spite of the limited means afforded by the four-part homophonically treated choir, that the whole visionary realm of the Psalms received, in Gomółka's music, a most faithful interpretation.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Polish music continued developing, thanks to the works of Andrew Staniczewski, John Radomski, George Nowakowski, Anioł Sorzewski, John Janczewski, A. Paszkiewicz, P. Damian, Maciej Wronowicz, Kasper Pierszynski, Antoni Milwid, Jacek Rozycki (conductor to King Jan III), Daniecki, Staromiejski, Sadecki, Jan Kromer, Maciej Miskiewicz, Maciej Łukaszewicz, Fierszewicz, Grzegorz

¹This Swedish dynasty reigned in Poland in the seventeenth century.

Gabryel Gorczyński (the last composer of Wavellian Rorantists, died in 1734), Waław Maksylewicz, and Maciej Zieleniewicz. Most of them were composers of vocal church music. After Jastrzembński, instrumental music was cultivated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Stanisław Silvester Szarzyński, and vocal-instrumental music by Stanisław Podolski, R. Charśnicki, A. Poziemkiewicz, later Joseph Kozłowski and Zygmuntowski.

In the history of the evolution of musical forms, Poland's participation did not bring any contribution. It does not, however, diminish the importance won by Polish music in the history of European music, just as the value of Shakespeare's dramas or Molière's comedies is not diminished by the fact that neither the theatre nor the form of theatrical art was created in England or France. We might draw more such comparisons.

Based upon a musical culture of several centuries, Polish music at last bore a fruit amazing in its magnificence, in the first part of the nineteenth century. It was the work of Frédéric Chopin. It is the blood and bone of our national life, the most universal expression of the Polish spirit, a lyric complement of the national Polish literature, a brilliant diamond and precious pearl in the crown of our art. Thanks to the universality of music, Chopin became the spiritual property of the whole world. Next to Copernicus, he is the best-known Pole in the world, Pole in spite of his French name and his father's French origin. But Poland, the country of his mother, Justine, *née* Krzyżanowska, became his country. The famous French writer Camille Bellaigue wrote the following words about Chopin: "The heart of his nation beats in his heart. I do not know any other musician who would be more patriotic than he. He is more of a Pole than anybody ever was a Frenchman, Italian, or German. He is a Pole, nothing but a Pole, and his music emerges like the immortal soul of his ruined and weary country. It is this melancholy soul sunk in mourning that we always hear sighing and complaining in his nocturnes and ballades. But how delightful and charming that very soul can be in his waltzes and mazurkas, how heroic in polonaises, of which many are masterpieces of triumphal epics." Is it necessary to produce a better proof as to Chopin's Polish consciousness than his works?

The first half of his short life (born in 1810, he died in 1849) was spent in Poland, in Warsaw and in the country among Polish families and Polish friends. Paris, where he settled in 1831 for the rest of his life, did not stifle his native spirit. It was rather stimulated by his nostalgia, and his country became dearer to him in

his far-away dreams. He wrote constantly to his family and friends. There are hundreds of letters left by Chopin, Polish in word, Polish in the feelings which they expressed. In face of such irrefutable proofs there is not even a shade of doubt left as to Chopin's nationality.

Chopin's production is linked most intricately with national music in two forms—polonaise and mazurka. The musical atmosphere of Warsaw, where little Chopin began to appropriate the technic of expressing himself by means of poetic sounds, was full of the rhythm of these two dances. Polonaises and mazurkas were being composed there in great quantities. No wonder that Chopin's first compository effort was a polonaise (published as a copper-print in 1817).

A masterly interpreter of the Polish spirit to the world at large, Chopin introduced into modern music a number of new forms and new means of musical expression; he enriched it with treasures that constantly bring new profits, planted marvelous seeds which always bear new crops. It is indubitable that without this immortally beautiful music, born spiritually on Polish soil, the music of the last 80 years would have been different in many respects and poorer than it is. Chopin's lyrical works disclosed to humanity the secret recesses of the subtlest lyrical thrills; they displayed the most charming, inspired melodies, opened unfathomed depths of harmonic schemes, played a whole colorful scale of sounds in most delicate shades. It seems that while talking about Chopin's works one ought to talk in verse. One hears in them whispers of one's own heart, the clamor of one's own senses, the hazy longings of one's own soul. The whole nation finds its picture in them, reads in them the history of its triumphs and defeats, feels in them the pulse of its blood.

Let us, however, drop poetic metaphor to discuss more concretely the significance of Chopin's art in the history of music.

The true field of his production was the piano. With few exceptions he wrote only for this instrument, which became a prism to break the rays of his inspiration into all colors of the rainbow. It was not necessary for Chopin to avail himself of the hundred-tongued orchestra to become the most sensitive colorist of sounds and to color the sound in all grades of tension. The piano became a part of his musical nature—it became Chopin's sixth sense.

Chopin usually clad his inspired ideas in small forms. With this genius of conciseness in expressing himself, he did not cultivate

broad cyclic forms to the same extent as the German classics. In the few measures of a prelude he knew how to enclose a whole drama, and in his Nocturnes he could display pictures of erotic scenes with wonderful vividness, sometimes at the highest pitch of sentimental ardor. Upon the canvas of the monotonous mazurka-rhythm he wove so many variegated pictures of the life of the Polish people, that, as Cyprian Norvid said, he lifted the inspiration of the people as to folk-music, to a power that penetrates and embraces all humanity. All Chopin's works were undoubtedly brought forth by some emotion or fancy, and for himself they meant the interpretation of their principal character and development. This does not mean that these works have some literary, non-musical character, and could not be understood without a so-called program. On the contrary, nothing in music is more absolute than Chopin's compositions! Their formal construction conforms to the most exacting conceptions of musical form; each idea seems to be created solely in order to realize the ideal of that musical form in whose limits it is set forth with such incomparable perfection. In this respect we discover in Chopin the Latin sense for the perfection of form. Chopin masterfully moulded the forms which he found in music into obedience to his own poetic musical aims. His attitude towards them was one of perfect liberty; he changed, for instance, the accepted type of the sonata to suit his own purposes and artistic needs; nevertheless, he conserved and made splendidly conspicuous the characteristics of sonata-form, which consists (in the first part) in the contrast of two themes and exhaustion of their motivic materials. In the following parts of the sonatic cycles he wove ideas which had a hidden spiritual connection. All the other forms manipulated by him he either lifted to an unknown artistic height, such as études, preludes, or he individualized them in accord with the individuality of his own genius.

A form which Chopin used for the first time, which was entirely his own, was the ballad. From the vocal-instrumental music where it was a sort of art adapted to the poetry, Chopin transferred it to the piano. His romantic, fantastically inclined temperament shows itself in a most perfect manner in his four ballads. In them are hidden poetic elements of the loftiest type, which excite the imagination and disclose visions of incomparable grandeur during the progress of these works. Poetic commentaries on these ballads could be found only in the sublimest achievements of the human spirit in the domains of poetry and of painting.

The Scherzo was treated by Chopin in a paradoxical way: from a part of a sonatic cycle, he raised it to complete independence. This form, which already with Beethoven stopped being a musical joke, a quaint and fascinating smile among the series of serious, heroic and lyric parts, becomes for Chopin the expression of his thoroughly romantic disposition, a result of his skeptical outlook, gathers in itself his skyward flights of thought beside his tragically painful, ironic portrayal of lost illusions and pictures which are no more of this world. Such are the three independent scherzos of Chopin, and also the scherzos of the two piano-sonatas. Only the fourth scherzo (in E sharp) has a more serene character.

New worlds of piano technique and musical expression were opened by the études and preludes of Chopin. It is impossible to consider them exhaustively here. The concise words of Rudolf Breithaupt, an author well known in Germany, will have to suffice. He wrote about Chopin in his work on music: "Chopin portrays a beautiful world for himself. His style is a closed entity, a distinct unit, not to be compared with anything in the history of music. It has no precedent and no following. His greatness ended with him. It never created a school. Chopin belongs to the class of unlimited geniuses. In spite of the comparative lack of productive power, in spite of the greatest partiality, he must be named in the class of Mozart-Beethoven-Schubert. He must be counted amongst the real positive discoverers. Nowhere do we possess a similarly impressive type of such absolute originality. Note after note, measure after measure, phrase after phrase, is specifically his own—the property of his soul. His manner of composition was and is always new, without example, without any definite borrowing, without any reminiscences. His spirit removed the last screens in his poems; it carried us to the gates of love and immortal longing and allowed us glimpses of both the active and the passive soul-states—of the land of silence and painful beauty. In awe we stand before this strange, fantastic magician, and pay homage to him as the greatest Polish musician, crying as did Eusebius (Schumann): 'Hats off, gentlemen! a genius!'"

The harmonic side of Chopin's compositions affords a topic to which we could dedicate a volume of analytical criticism. His new chords, his way of joining chords, his modulation, everything in fact which belongs to the phenomena of harmony in Chopin's works, constitute a new epoch in this field. In the pamphlet entitled "*Die Harmonik der Neuzeit*" (1881) T. P. Laurencin wrote about Chopin: "Chopin was one of the foremost minds of all times in the creation of musical forms. A man—all tones—he

was the greatest exceptional nature which ever appeared either in history or life." A résumé of his criticisms about Chopin's harmony said: "The so-called delayed notes, or the syncopation of chords, about deceptive steps, and long-drawn, sometimes unexpected dissonances, as long as they are Chopin's they cannot be called exceptions, but rather rules. The solution of these problems is either contrary to all expectations, either a long-drawn organ note, with a wave of suspensions, syncopations, retardations, contrary movements towering above it (or however else these heavy sighs and bloody tears of an ever-inspired soul may be labelled), or it is a three-tone chord *en dépit*. Chopin is—I must use the term—an incessant, resounding *inganno*. He is one of those who can never be exhausted or sounded to the depths. His muse is the grandest, the most versatile, and at the same time the most original of all that have ever sought artistic expression. Chopin is the musical program of all musical adepts."

The polonaises and mazurkas were prepared for Chopin by the preceding music of Poland. But not only in those does the world see all the Polish spirit of his music. "Poland gave him chivalry, and an historic anguish," said Heine; and Anton Rubinstein added on the leaves of the book "Die Musik und ihre Meister": "In all his compositions one hears how he relates the ancient glory of Poland, how he rejoices in it; one hears how he sings of its later fall, how he pities it, weeps for it; and all in the most musical, beautiful way." The Polish spirit of Chopin's compositions illuminates each of his works—ballads, sonatas, scherzos, études and concertos as well as polonaises and mazurkas.

Since the last half-century, Chopin's creativeness belongs to the universal fund of musical culture throughout the world. Every one who has developed a certain technique on the piano, appropriates his preludes or études. A Polish traveller, passing through the by-ways of France or Italy, Germany or Bohemia, often hears the familiar strains of Chopin's beautiful music floating through some open window. On the concert stage, great and small pianists of all nationalities execute so much of his music, that it constitutes at least half of the piano music generally played. This is so in all parts of the world.

Love of Chopin's music presents itself also in the various monographs by the following authors: Liszt, Schulz, Karasowski, Niecks, Enault, Kelley, Huneker, Humbert, Gariel, Barbedette, Leichtentritt and Weissman, with a monumental biography of Chopin by Ferdinand Hoesick at the end (1911). It is impossible

to enumerate all the smaller treatises and articles on Chopin in all languages.

Had Polish music produced only him, it would still have a secure and favored place in the history of universal music. His art, ever living, daily becomes nearer and dearer to mankind; it guarantees fame to the music of Poland, it guarantees its reality to a higher degree than that of any other great master of former epochs, who have left only names and whole libraries of literature.

The Polish heart of Chopin became the musical heart of all civilized humanity.

Contemporaneously with Chopin, Polish music, also aided by lesser talents, penetrated beyond the Polish borders into the wider world. We cannot forget the fact that the memorable Polonaise of Oginski drew great crowds; that Elsner and Krupiński found publishers for their compositions in Germany and France; that the works of Dobrzyński reached the hands of the foremost German composers. Simultaneously, Polish virtuosi were gaining recognition and winning glory in the concert halls of Europe. For instance, Maria Szymanowska (1791-1832) had great success as a pianist and composer and aroused the admiration of the aged Goethe by her poetic interpretation. The greatest fame, however, was gained to Karol Joseph Lipinski (1790-1861), a violinist of powerful tone and technique, vying in brilliancy with Paganini, whose friend he really was—although a formidable rival on the concert stage. From amongst the mass of his works, his “military” concerto holds its place beside the concertos of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Spohr, and other great composers.

Another nineteenth-century composer, second best beloved by the Polish heart—Stanisław Moniuszko—did not have enough ambitious energy to make his works popular beyond the borders of his native land, and (much like Nicholas Góńka) he created “Not for Italians, but for Poles—for his plain compatriots.” Among his many productions his songs, first of all, became popular outside of his own country. Only Hugo Riemann was capable of expressing his gratitude in a history of music of the nineteenth century in a few simple words about Moniuszko: “Stanisław Moniuszko (1820-1872) ought to be mentioned with respect next to Chopin, especially because of some of his deeply-felt songs about the spirit that is entirely and completely Polish—Polish to the very bottom.” Unjustifiable is Riemann’s slur on Moniuszko’s operas, of which *Halka* was much performed on the operatic stages of Europe, and still appears regularly on the repertoires of Bohemian theatres. At the time of the international exposition

in Vienna, in 1890, an opportunity presented itself to create a way for Moniuszko's operas, but alas, the organization of the Polish section was so inadequate that it was difficult to gain advantageous results for Polish music. Undoubtedly, Moniuszko would have become as steady a guest in international opera as the Bohemian composer Smetana (who won his place through the splendid production of his comic opera *The Bartered Bride* by the Viennese Exposition), had his finest work been executed—the highest expression of his melodious creations, the serene and lyric opera *The Haunted Mansion* (*Straszny Dwór*).

Much more frequently than Moniuszko's works, were played the compositions of Zygmunt Noskowski. Many of them appeared in editions of foreign publishers; his symphonic poem *The Prairie*, and his symphonic variations on Chopin's seventh Prelude, were played by all the larger symphony orchestras of the world. Noskowski was the first of Poland's orchestral composers who attained that instrumental technique which, owing to the greatly enlarged symphonic powers since the times of Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner, became a necessary condition to the expressive rendering *ex cathedra* of the new symphony. For very many years of the past century, the names of several Kątski (de Kontski) brothers were well known in all the musical world. The pillars of fame of this talented family were Anthony Kątski, pianist (1817-1899), who in the last year of his life still gave concerts in America, Australia and Japan; and Apolinary Kątski, violinist, the director of the conservatory of music in Warsaw.

From amongst the mass of his wide-ranging compositions, Władysław Zelenki brought into the international musical market, first of all, his songs and *salon* music. This veritable master of cyclic forms everywhere met approval for his violin sonata, his quartet, piano trio, and concerto. The operas *Konrad Wallenrod*, *Goplana*, *Janek*, and *The Old Tale*, did not enter the European repertoire.

A worldwide reputation was gained by Henry Wieniawski, violinist and composer (1835-1880). His concerto in D-flat, his *Kujawiak*, and his dizzily brilliant *Fantaisie* from Gounod's *Faust*, belong to the best works on the programs of the most renowned violinists. These compositions are replete with sentiment and ingenuity. They are perfect in form and, despite their difficulty, they belong to the very finest music of the post-Romantic era. His younger brother Joseph Wieniawski (1837-1911) was known as a splendid pianist, a first-rate teacher, and a composer of charming pieces for his instrument. He lived almost exclusively

beyond the borders of Poland—for the last thirty-six years in Brussels.

While the brothers Wieniawski personally and through their work continued to be members of Polish society, the ties of friendship loosened between it and the valued pianist and composer Maurice Moszkowski, as well as between Poland and the brothers Ludwik, Philip and Xavery Szarwenka (Scharwenka).

In the musical world of Berlin, the brothers Szarwenka occupy a high standing as pedagogues, composers and publishers of musical-literary works. Amongst German orchestra conductors, Rafal Maszkowski occupied a conspicuous place (1838-1901).

Emil Młynarski won equal fame in England, where, since a few years, he conducted the finest orchestras. His compositions procured him a big name, especially at the Paderewski competition at Leipzig, when he won the first prize with his violin concerto.

The reproductive genius of Ignace J. Paderewski has spread the fame of Polish music to the remotest corners of the world. His name as pianist has a magical sound in both hemispheres. At present among the large number of splendid virtuosi, Paderewski is truly a great personage, authority and only he, perhaps, equal to Liszt. Keeping almost in pace with his art, come his compositions (published by the Berlin firm, Bote und Bock), all rich and musical themes, monumental in dimensions. At their head stand Sonatas, variations, piano concertos and the symphony entitled *Polonia*. On several stages were executed, also, Paderewski's "Manru," based upon Kraszewski's novel, "The Hut Beyond the Village."

In spite of difficult conditions in the Polish industry of publishing music, and the very onerous competition of world-renowned foreign publishing firms who oppose everything in the music trade which is produced without their assistance, worthy Polish musical compositions appeared during the last few years in the European market and in more and more conspicuous quantities. We greet that as a victory of Polish music, won by Poland herself, without the aid of any organized capitalistic publishing concern. However, if foreign publishing firms produce Polish compositions, then, although a material loss to Polish industry and commerce, it is a decided testimony to the artistic value of many Polish compositions, since it is only for that reason and for the ensuing profit that they include them in their editions.

In this way many works of Stojowski, Meltzer, Hofmann, Koczalski, were issued by foreign concerns. These are writers who create mostly piano music, they being at the same time splendid pianists. Zygmund Stojowski is a product of Zeleński's

School; he then studied under Delibes and Massenet. Besides his beautiful symphony, he is known for many characteristic piano pieces. Many of them contain Polish motives. Because of his works and his art, Stojowski received great recognition in America. He settled in New York as an inspector of classes in a Conservatory of that city. Henry Meltzer became famous through his two piano concertos, which won the prize at the International Competition. Joseph Hofmann is considered one of the foremost pianists of the day. His compositions belong to the class of a brilliant virtuoso. Raul Koczalski, as a player and composer, is a favorite in musical salons, especially in Germany.

Through the charming and melodious compositions of Jan Galland and Stanislaw Niewiadomski, Polish song, after the time of Moniuszko, also found opportunity to awaken interest beyond the borders, there gaining great popularity.

And when we speak of song, the names of world-renowned Polish singers ought to be mentioned; names of the last years of the past century as well as those of the present. They are Alexander Mierzwinski, Jan and Edward de Reszke, Marcella Sembrich Kochanska, Helena Zboinska-Ruszkowska, Janina Korolewicz-Wajdowa, Alexander Bandrowski, Adam Dygas, Adam Didur, not to mention throngs of less known singers.

Produced by Polish society and always acknowledging the fact, are these eminent virtuosos: Maurice Rosenthal, pianist, Bronislaw Huberman, Pawel Kochanski, violinist, Ignacy Friedman, pianist and productive composer, and above all Arthur Rubinstein, who possesses one of the finest talents of reproduction—a phenomenal pianist and an enthusiastic disciple of the newest musical school of Poland, especially of Karol Szymanowski's works.

A great deal was done for the modern virtuoso and for didactic technique of the piano by the splendid teacher of hundreds of artists from all nations—Theodore Leszetycki (Leschetizki), 1830–1915, creator of the recognized method, known under his name. Jerzy Lalewicz enjoys great success at present as a pianist and pedagogue in Vienna.

Amongst the constellation of Polish composers of the younger generation, a prominent place is held by these few who just now best represent Polish music abroad: Mieczyslaw Karłowicz (1876–1909), Ludomir Rozycki (1883), and Karol Szymanowski (1882). The first-named developed first of all the symphonic poems (The Rebounding Waves, Eternal Songs, Stanislaw and Anna Oswiecim, etc.). His powerful technique of orchestration and the

lofty character of his music always called forth in music-loving European capitals eloquent criticisms as to the talent of Karłowicz. Ludomir Różycki is a creative genius of strength and versatility. Several symphonic poems, three operas, many songs, and salon and piano pieces testify to the productivity of this composer. Różycki adopted all contemporaneous resources of technical composition; however, in his style of expression he is a veritable eclectic. His last opera, *Eros and Psyche*, after the drama of Jerzy Żuławski¹, was first produced at Breslau in March, 1917, there gaining great popularity.

Karol Szymanowski, the boldest and richest creative talent at the present day in Poland, follows the traditions of Chopin in his numerous and valued works. His symphonic and piano compositions, his songs and *salon* pieces, rank with the best in contemporary European music. They are marked by majestic dignity, by the highest poetical inspiration, and by incomparable mastery of polyphonic technique. Szymanowski always expresses himself in music in an original manner, in spite of the cosmopolitan way in which it testifies to his Polish spirit; testifies so strongly that even a foreign listener senses it immediately. After a few concerts of Szymanowski's works in Berlin, in London and Vienna, his compositions became international property.

And so by means of hard work, continuing through several centuries, Polish music gained the right to a place in the music of Europe, and adds from generation to generation to her store of treasures whose foundation was laid by the Spirit of the Nation.

¹This work has been translated into English.